

United States History ~ Civil War to the Present **8th Grade**

Class website: <http://bcdshistory.wikispaces.com/>

Most class periods begin on the history website. There, students can explore links, download resources, retrieve copies of class notes, watch embedded content, share original creations, save study guides, and find relevant course materials. Also on the site are enrichment pages for extensions of the daily learning, as well as support resources (such as graphic organizers) to help students feel successful.

Materials:

The course draws the majority of its content from online resources, in-class handouts, multimedia sources, and primary documents. The iPad, therefore, is essential each day to provide students access to discovery and documentation. The course textbook is Houghton Mifflin's *History Of The United States: Civil War To The Present*. The other key tool is a binder for taking notes and saving handouts.

Homework:

Much of the homework in history class will be based on reviewing a time period or an event prior to a day's discussion. Readings from the textbook or supplementary materials, as well as watching online content, can be helpful toward gaining a foundation in the historical era. Completing the homework means being prepared to discuss details of the specific material as well as feeling comfortable with the larger issues being addressed. Taking notes while reading or watching is an effective strategy for students to capture main ideas. Students should also feel comfortable asking in class about any questions that arise from an evening's preparations.

Written homework, when assigned, will range from thinking exercises and reading responses to occasional essays or research projects. Students can expect that written homework will be collected or checked for completion. Scheduled quizzes and also short, unscheduled (pop) quizzes will reinforce the homework.

Class time:

Classroom methods will include discussions, explorations, group work, debates, research, and iPad-aided analysis. Special attention will be given to evaluating primary sources, incorporating geography and current events, and developing the skills of critical essay writing. Eighth-grade students during the year may also conduct independent research and writing, which would replace the appropriate categories of in-class work.

Grading System:

40% Principal Assessments (Tests, Projects, etc.)
30% Supplemental Assessments (Quizzes, Writing, etc.)
20% Classwork and Homework
10% Participation

Late Work:

Students should please discuss with the teacher *ahead of time* if they know they will miss a class or an assignment. If a student is absent due to illness, he or she can expect to have the number of days missed to make up any work. In turn, students can reliably expect the teacher to help them catch up on any missed lessons or class notes. Work turned in late without permission will lose half a letter grade for every day late (e.g., a written assignment that would have earned a B+ will drop to a B for the first day late, B- for the second, etc.).